



Methodologies of Population and Housing Censuses: Revisited

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The 2010 Round of World Population and Housing Programme, which spanned from 2005 to 2014, witnessed that a number of countries in the world were moving away from tradition way of conducting a census, i.e. soliciting information from each household in a country through field enumeration. The interests in the use of alternative approaches to a traditional census have surged over time, because of the growing expectation for the national statistics offices (NSOs) to produce more frequent and timely statistics, the pressure to reduce the budget for census taking, and as a response to the reluctance of the population to participate in a census. The advancement of modern technologies and increased technical capacities of NSOs have also enabled them to look for innovative ways to produce census statistics. Hence, a growing number of countries, especially in Western Europe, started gathering census data from registers or combining them with other sources of information such as surveys.

Given the interests in alternative approaches to a traditional way of conducting a census which have emerged, the paper will first provide an overview of census methodologies employed by countries in the world during the 2010 Census Round. The paper will closely examine a respective methodology, in light of the essential features of population and housing censuses, namely, individual enumeration, universality within a defined territory, simultaneity, and defined periodicity and small area statistics. The necessary conditions for introducing specific approach will be explored, with the discussion of advantages and disadvantages of using such methodology. Lastly, based on the trends which emerged recently, the likelihood of using alternative approaches among countries during the 2020 census round will be argued.

The paper is based on the discussions emanated during the processes to revise the UN Principles and Recommendations for the Population and Housing Censuses and the Recommendations for the Population and Housing Censuses in UN ECE region, both to prepare for the 2020 census round.

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